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Preamble

- An innovative and future-oriented Europe relies on long-term international competitiveness and viability, as well as on its ability to be among global leaders, to contribute to tomorrow's growth and prosperity, and to meet the goals of the digital and green transformation.
- Overall, the European Union (EU) needs to become a space, where innovations are discovered and implemented more efficiently and faster. A balanced approach to policy instruments is crucial to this end. Therefore, the European Commission needs to carry out a detailed analysis of factors influencing the EU's innovation competitiveness. Building on this analysis, suggestions on how to transform digital policy-making and implementation processes in the EU shall be drawn-up.
- Legislative processes need to be streamlined openly and transparently, together with the use of Better Regulation tools and principles, including legislation to fit in and be adaptable to the existing administrative structures within the Member States and their authorities.
- Europe needs to act in a timely and agile manner to reap the innovation benefits offered by digitalisation across sectors.
- Europe needs an opportunity-oriented and innovation-friendly digital agenda. Digitalisation must be thought of and shaped holistically. This includes reviewing and consolidating the existing variety of the EU´s digital policy instruments, focussing on their simplification (like "one-in one-out").
- Interoperability shall be adopted as a prevailing mindset across all sectors, creating a truly interoperable Digital Single Market, turning European diversity from a challenge into a transformative advantage.
- Digital transformation across the EU must be based on our common values and principles in a pragmatic way, creating added value for the citizens and the economy. To this end, we present the following proposals for the next European Commission's future-proof Digital Agenda.

Key points for a future-proof EU Digital Agenda

1. Ensure high-class digital infrastructure as an enabler for a digitally transformed Europe.

- Achieve resilient and sustainable high-capacity networks and a future-proof, strong, secure and competitive electronic communications sector as the foundation for our society and our businesses, as well as the EU's digital sovereignty.
- Accompany any establishment of new instruments or revision of existing instruments in the telecommunications sector with a thorough analysis of its necessity and proportionality, respecting the principle of subsidiarity and taking into account the expected impact on the economy and society.
- Support, where required, the fast and efficient roll-out of gigabit networks and the latest mobile communications standard by regulatory conditions, which at the same time incentivise innovation and investment as well as foster competition.
- Maintain the free and open internet and enshrine net neutrality as paramount principle.
- Keep European high-performance computing infrastructures globally competitive at all times.
- Foster an environment which attracts innovative, consumer friendly applications and services.

2. Advance Europe on its path to data economy.

- Pay sustained, high-level political attention to achieving a comprehensive, cross-sectoral approach to the data economy.
- Increase political support for initiatives implementing the data driven society in Europe.
- Make (open) Data more accessible and retrievable, easier to use and re-use (by overcoming legal, institutional and technical obstacles), including across borders, while fully respecting intellectual property and individual data protection rights. Continue the process of defining additional high-value datasets, which have major impact on the society and economy. Promote the use of competitive, interoperable standards (including for data and interfaces).
- Harmonize access to and stimulate the uptake of data generated by the EU, e.g. the EU Space Programme, for data-based decision-making, business development and digitalisation.
- Facilitate a more pragmatic approach to international data flows. Establish binding rules on data transfers with key trade partners to ensure EU companies' global competitiveness.
- Ensure planning certainty for private investments into the data ecosystem and a reliable framework for data-driven business models.
- Streamline data protection practices to current needs of digitalisation. This may include comprehensive work to ensure consistent interpretation and implementation at EU level. Promote the development of cross-sectoral data spaces.

3. Ensure an effective platform regulation with a human-centric approach which joins competences within the European Commission and Member States in the developing virtual world.

- Continuously foster a safe and trusted online environment, while addressing not only the dissemination of illegal or harmful content online but also the possible misuse of the latest technological tools, data storage and transfer.
- Monitor the latest technological developments, especially with regard to e.g. immersive technologies and neurotechnologies (see León Declaration on European neurotechnology) and evaluate the possible reaction on EU level, in order to fully grasp the possibilities of the mentioned technologies.

4. Establish cybersecurity as a joint task.

- Recognize cybersecurity as a key capability and key aspect of the security of digital technology.
- Develop methodologies to evaluate the necessary level of investments into cybersecurity to establish a minimum level of cybersecurity in both public and private sectors.
- Support companies, in particular SMEs, in using and developing cybersecurity technologies.

5. Less burdensome digital environments in EU for businesses and consumers.

- Ensure the transparency and predictability of legislative processes in digital policy, put a stronger focus on impact assessments (incl. on spot amendments and ex-post evaluation) of legislative acts and evaluation of Member States' readiness to adopt and adapt to new regulations.
- Strive for less burdensome business and consumer environments to ensure Single Market's competitiveness in the long-term. Transparently evaluate and reduce administrative burdens (incl. reporting and compliance costs). Reporting requirements should be subject to the once only principle.
- Promote the development of the Single Digital Gateway toward supporting better user-experience, giving transparent data protection guarantees, innovating and modernizing further cross-border data exchange in the "Once Only Technical System".
- Promote transitioning to the use of the once only principle, including the data minimization principle, where only the required data is requested and shared between competent authorities that have the right to process them.

6. Further promote innovation and consolidate funding.

- Create added value for our societies and our partners through funding programmes. Shape and consolidate financing and support measures for innovation in the public and private sector, including SMEs and start-ups. Bridge the gap between the narrative of the "knowledge society" and of budgetary and other priorities via these efforts.
- Support future technologies holistically from network level to material, component, microchip and module level through strategic research and development.

- Continue direct investments in Research & Development to ensure common development.
- Promote green transition principles in digitalisation and link them to sectoral policies considering economic impact and possible burdens on businesses:
    - Design – sustainable information systems with a low energy consumption;
    - Use – reduce the ecological footprint by minimizing energy , e.g. when processing data or manufacturing.
    - Reuse – circular economy concept.

7. Strengthen digital literacy to enhance the innovative potential of the digital age.

- *Artificial* intelligence (AI) needs to be a tool for evaluating Big Data and enhancing *human* intelligence and versatility in data-driven decision-making.
- Ensure basic data, digital, AI and cybersecurity literacy across the population by awareness raising, promoting life-long learning, re-skilling and incorporating these topics into curricula as an enabler for people.
- Improve multilingualism in the digital environment.

8. Actively involve SMEs, including start-ups.

- Integrate entrepreneurial expertise and feedback while creating and developing user-centric, innovative, and smart digital services.
- Support SMEs in the digital transformation through providing better public e-services and increasing their digital competences and technical capabilities, in particular in smart data sharing.

9. Ensure effective and comprehensive digital administration.

- Establish e-government solutions across borders. Create viable communities of practice for the implementation of cross-border e-government solutions to strengthen organisational capabilities in this area through the exchange of knowledge and experience.
- In preparing and developing new initiatives and innovations, implement integration and interoperability with existing systems, data spaces and other e-government solutions across borders by default.
- To allow the EU Digital Single Market to fully flourish, steer EU-wide interoperability across sectors to guarantee the best overview of the existing EU information systems and digital tools.
- Strengthen the coordinated implementation and management of pan-European e-government solutions, including by more effectively utilizing the capacity of existing agencies, e.g. eu-LISA.
- Use interoperable electronic identities and (*inter alia* semantic) standards for access to digital public services.
- Strengthen the deployment of cloud services.

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